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OUR
VETERAN DEFENDERS.

SILVER ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR.

Beidler.



DETROIT, MICHIGAN, 1866-1891.

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VETERANS.

HAIL! welcome veterans, with locks of gray,
Each strand has language speaking of the day
On which you left the hearth of home and love
To save the Flag, or find a home above
Among the stars that decked your couch at night,
Whose beams were kissing you before the fight.

YOU met on tented field with purpose pure;
You met, the soldier's hardships to endure,
You met in trench of mire, and drifting sand;
You met on mountain and on ocean's strand;
You met on gulf and river night and day,
And ever ready for the mortal fray.

BUT when you met your locks were brown or black,
And steps were firm,—accoutrements on back.
You laughed at danger, frowning at the foe.
With eagerness you tramped through sun or snow,
From trench to trench, in double quick your step,
And when in ditch on knees through snow-slush crept.

NO long and weary march could ardor break,
For chilly morn found every man awake.
In cloudy night as sentry on his beat,
With sleepless eyes, and tired, burning feet,
He thought of home, and saw his nestlings sleep,
His frame then shook, but dared not stop to weep.

AS midnight stars are veiled in deepest black,
The sentry plods to find his beaten track.
Unbroken silence reigns as shrouded death;
He breathed in darkness, with a shortened breath.
A stirring leaf by chance may cause a halt—
“Who’s there?” then echoes through the blacken’d vault.

HE feels electric sparks drive through his hair,
He feels a spinal chill,—vibrating air,—
He feels his tingling cheeks are then aglow,
His ears are burning, list’ning for the foe;
But still continues on with shortened breath,
The sentinel to slumber would be death.

RELIEF, how welcome when it comes at last !

To meet at mess his mates at bugle blast,
Appeasing hunger with the bread of corn;
If chilly cold, perhaps a soothing "horn."
When orders came "to arms!" to arms you went,
As shells were flying round your little tent.

IN double quick as columns formed in haste,
The trying point—no moment then to waste—
You drive with rattling musketry the foe,
Whilst passing o'er the dead, through redd'n'd snow.
They quickly rally, forcing a retreat;
Increasing force makes victory complete.

A FIELD of sick and wounded, dying, dead,
To meet your comrades where you too had bled,
Becomes the witnesses of deeds just wrought.
To bury comrades loved, as brothers ought,
And meet the wounded foe with words of peace,
No act to mar, nor anguish to increase.

WHEN victory was yours, and flag was furled,
You proudly showed a gazing, anxious world
That soldiers are but citizens in peace;
Each man a sovereign when the struggles cease.
To gain fresh laurels, bubbling wealth, and fame,
Is now the soldier's part and highest aim.

TO celebrate the victories of youth,
You stand the monument of struggling truth.
Red war and peace united strength of State
With patriotic love, and Nation'l weight
Of sixty millions with continued peace,
Whose strength and altitude shall still increase.

SO when all nations meet in ninety-three
They'll find a government made by the free.
Between two tides that lash their coast with waves,
Where stars and stripes with purpose ever waves;
And kissed by every breeze that purpose blows,
And blessed by God, as progress clearly shows.

BRAVE veterans, prosperity doth owe
The gratitude the people now bestow;
The valor you displayed when life was young;
When sword to sever on the balance hung.
Your weary feet, to-day, in marking time,
Show strength doth wane, as hopes become sublime.

WHEN you are standing on the steps of light,
As twilight shades are changing into night,
To gaze through gorgeous depth—sun-setting sea—
With hope, and faith, and love, there you shall see
On spreading plains uncounted millions blest,
In silence waiting your approach in rest.

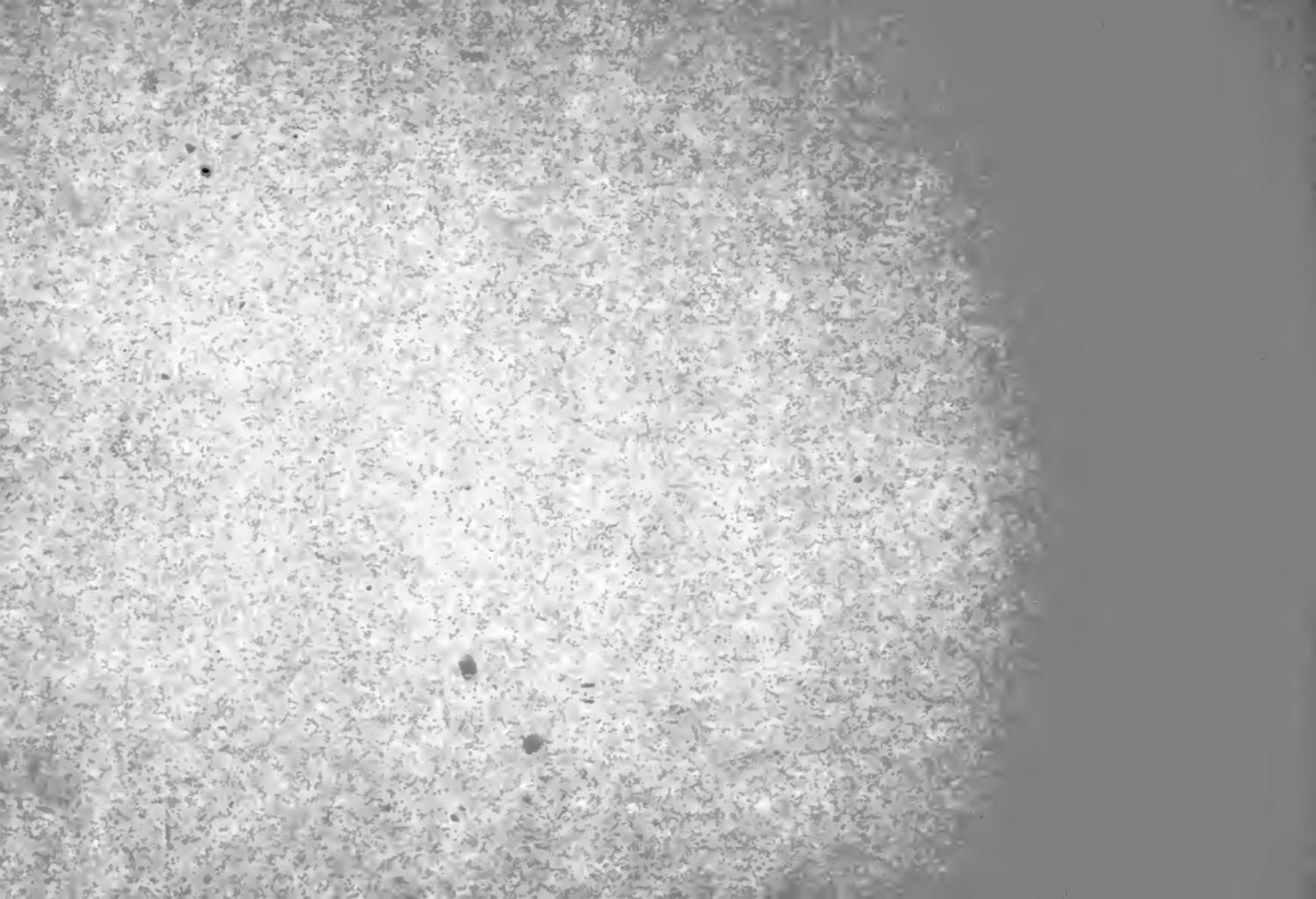
THEN all posterity on you shall gaze;
Your name be first on lips pronouncing praise.
Your deeds the record of a nation's pride;
A sacred truth that shall in hearts abide.
Whilst silk shall grow and freedom's shuttle fly,
The Flag shall guard the names that never die.

YOU'LL soon be tented in some brighter space,
Where all again shall meet by Heaven's grace;
Two noble armies of a kindred blood,
Beyond the icy river and its flood,
Where Washington shall greet, on mystic hight,
With benediction from the throne of light.

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Park Beidler, July 23, 1891.





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